

## Perfection of Wisdom Sutras

### WHEEL OF DHARMA

Sanskrit: Dharma chakra

Tibetan: རྩི་འཁོར་ལོ་ - *Choe kyi Khorlo* (*Choe* = Dharma, *kyi* = genitive, *Khorlo* = Wheel)

From the time of his enlightenment at Bodhgaya until his death in Kushinagar Buddha Shakyamuni gave extensive teachings - he 'turned the Wheel of Dharma'. It is said there are 84,000 collections of discourses which the Buddha taught according to the diverse dispositions, inclinations and interests of sentient beings.

Of the numerous ways in which to classify those teachings, one of the most common ways is to classify them into the 'Three Wheels of Dharma'.

### Three Wheels of Dharma

*First Wheel* — the first wheel of Dharma constitutes mainly Hinayana (fundamental vehicle) teachings given in the vicinity of Sarnath/Varanasi just after Buddha Shakyamuni's enlightenment. They include his first teaching, the *Sutra on the Four Noble Truths* to his five ascetic disciples.

*Second Wheel* — the second wheel of Dharma constitutes mainly Mahayana (universal vehicle) teachings given at the vicinity of Rajghir. They include the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*.

*Third Wheel* — the third wheel of Dharma constitutes mainly Mahayana teachings given in the vicinity of Vaishali and Shravasti towards the end of Buddha's life. They include the *Sutra Unraveling the Thought*, the *Tathagatagarbha Sutra*, and teachings on tantra.

### Perfection of Wisdom Sutras

English: Wisdom that has gone beyond (literally: gone to the other side) / Perfection of Wisdom

Sanskrit: *Prajnaparamita*

Tibetan: ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་ཕ་རོལ་དུ་ཕྱིན་པ། - *She rab kyi Pha rol du Chin pa* (*She rab*=wisdom, *kyi*=genitive,

*Pha rol*=beyond/the other side, *du*=locative particle, *Chin pa*=gone)

English: Perfection of Wisdom Sutra

Tibetan: ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་ཕ་རོལ་དུ་ཕྱིན་པའི་མདོ། / ཤེས་ཕྱིན་ཀྱི་མདོ། - *She rab kyi Pha rol du Chin pai Do/Sher Chin gyi*

*Do* (*Sher Chin*=abbreviation of *She rab kyi Pha rol du Chin pa*, *gyi*=genitive, *Do*=Sutra)

The *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* which the Buddha taught during the second turning of the Wheel of Dharma is the principal genre of the Buddha's teachings. They flourish in many countries, including China - from where they were brought to Japan, Korea and Vietnam - and Tibet from where they were transmitted to Mongolia, the trans-Himalayan region and to areas within the Russian federation. In Tibet, the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* became an important subject for study in the monastic colleges of all the four Tibetan traditions.

The *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* are also called 'Sutras of the Venerable Mother'. Here 'Venerable Mother' refers to *Prajna-Paramita*, the female Buddha figure that represents wisdom. *Prajna-Paramita* is called 'Venerable Mother' because like a mother gives birth to her children, wisdom gives birth to all Arya beings.

### Seventeen Mother and Son Sutras:

Tibetan: ཡུ་ས་སྐུ་བརྩ་བཟུང་གི་མདོ། - *Yum Sae Chub duen gyi Do* (*Yum*=mother, *Sae*=son,

*Chub duen*=seventeen, *gyi*=genitive, *Do*=sutra)

There are numerous different *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* of various lengths. Seventeen of those were translated into Tibetan, one of them being, for instance, the *Heart Sutra*. These seventeen are collectively called the 'Seventeen Mother and Son Sutras'.

## Ornament for Clear Realizations

The *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* explicitly teach emptiness and implicitly or in a hidden fashion the meditational paths leading to enlightenment. Nagarjuna in his *Six Compendia of Reasoning* expounded on the explicit meaning of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* and Maitreya in his *Ornament for Clear Realizations* expounded on the implicit meaning of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*. The *Ornament for Clear Realizations* is therefore a commentary on the implicit meaning of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*.

### The Principal Sutra Sources of the Ornament

English: the principal sutra sources of the Ornament

Tibetan: མངོན་རྟོགས་རྒྱན་གྱི་འགྲེལ་བྱ་ཙ་པའི་མངོ། - *Ngoen Tog Gyen gyi She ja Tsa wai Do* (*Ngoen*=clear,

*Tog*=realization, *Gyen*=ornament, *She ja Tsa wai Do*=principal Sutra source)

Even though the Ornament is a commentary of all the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras, its principal Sutra sources are:

1. (The Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in) **One Hundred Thousand** (Verses) འབྲུམ། - *Bum*
2. (The Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in) **Twenty Thousand** (Verses) ཉི་ཁྲི། - *Nyi Tri*
3. (The Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in) **Eight Thousand** (Verses) བརྒྱད་ཕྱེད་པ། - *Gyae Tong ba*

### The Twenty-One Commentaries

There are twenty-one Indian commentaries on the *Ornament* that are deemed most important and were therefore translated into Tibetan. Those commentaries are also commentaries of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*. However, some of those correlate the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* with the Ornament (twelve commentaries) and some don't (nine commentaries).

### NAME OF THE TEXT

English: *Ornament for Clear Realizations*

Sanskrit: *Abisamaya-alamkara*

Tibetan: མངོན་རྟོགས་རྒྱན། - *Ngoen Tog Gyen* (*Ngoen*=clear, *Tog*=realization, *Gyen*=ornament)

The full title of the ***Ornament for Clear Realizations*** is

In Sanskrit: *Abhisamaya-alamkara-nama-prajnaparamita-upadesha-shastra-karika*

In Tibetan: ཤེས་རབ་གྱི་ཕ་རོལ་དུ་ཕྱིན་པའི་མན་ངག་གི་བསྟན་བཅོས་མངོན་པར་རྟོགས་པའི་རྒྱན་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་ཆོག་ལེའུར་བྱས་པ།

(Pronounced: *She rab kyi Pha rol du chin pai Men ngag gi Ten choe Ngoen bar Tog pai Gyen zhe ja wai Tshig Leur je pa*)

### The meaning of the words in Sanskrit is:

*abisamaya*=clear realization, *alamkara*=ornament, *nama*=so-called, *prajnaparamita*=perfection of wisdom, *upadesha*=quintessential instructions, *shastra*=treatise, *karika*=verses and chapters

**The meaning of the words in Tibetan is:** *She rab kyi Pha rol du chin pa*=perfection of wisdom, *Men ngag*=quintessential instruction, *gi*=genitive, *Ten choe*=treatise, *Ngoen bar Tog pai Gyen*=ornament for clear realizations, *zhe ja wai*=so-called, *Tshig Leur je pa*=verses and chapters.